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ABSTRACT

The document reviews the School-to-Work Project, which has been concerned with improving and developing the school component of the job placement process. Research, design, development, and dissemination phases and results are traced from 1972-1976 through the following stages: (1) Research, 1972-74, involving a literature search to identify various approaches to school centered job placement, a national survey to ascertain the frequency and quality of placement programs, technical assistance to schools initiating or expanding job placement services, and development of six guides for job placement service development and implementation; (2) Development, 1974-75, involving the development and assessment of a Placement Services Training Curriculum Manual, aimed at education professionals; and (3) Dissemination, 1975-76, involving the distribution of project-developed materials to 17 State departments of education. Opposition to school-based job placement includes a lack of funds, the feeling that placement is not a proper function of the schools, and employer and labor organization reluctance to provide additional support due to economic conditions. It is stated that school job placement services are much more numerous than when the project began, indicating general success. (LH)

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MAY 27 1976

FINAL REPORT

SCHOOL-TO-WORK PROJECT

February 27, 1976

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

School-to-Work Project Team

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of the School-to-Work Project has been to improve the process by which young people seek jobs and begin to work for money. The National Advisory Council has repeatedly emphasized that the transition from the school to the work place requires learning; no less essential are the connecting, unifying relationships among the community of employers, the state employment services, and the schools themselves. As early as 1970, in its Third Report, the National Advisory Council asserted, without reservation, that every school should be a placement office. The schools make specific efforts to assist 20% of their students to enter college to consume further education. They must provide similar help to the other 80% who struggle to add their talents to the processes of the productive society.

Because of its role in the national scene, the National Advisory Council was well placed to bolster the school component of the job placement process. The visibility of the Council, and the education-community-industry backgrounds of its constituents enabled the Council to take action with confidence and effectiveness. Beginning in 1972, the Council initiated its School-to-Work Project, a systematic strategy for change. Research, design, development, and dissemination phases followed, each focusing more narrowly on a specific portion of the school-to-work transition.

This report reviews the School-to-Work Project. The first section describes, chronologically, the Project's activites. The second section recounts the achievements of the Council in sponsoring the Project. The final chapter suggests some topics related to job placement that the Council may consider in the future.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

SUMMARY

Phase I - Research

November 1972 - March 1974

Phase I of the School-to-Work Project consisted of applied research: a literature search; a survey of existing job placement programs; technical assistance to schools that were initiating or expanding job placement services. Phase I showed that school-based job placement is feasible and beneficial and that specific actions could be taken to stimulate the diffusion of the school-based placement concept.

Phase II - Development

July 1974 - October 1975

Based on the research completed in Phase I, Phase II was a development phase. In cooperation with the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation, and with the assistance of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, the School-to-Work Project developed and tested a Placement Services Training Curriculum Manual. The Manual was to be used in training education professionals who would be responsible for school-based job placement.

Phase III - Dissemination

July 1975 - March 1976

The final segment of the Project involved the dissemination of the Manual and other placement-related materials to State Departments of Education, State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education, and other users.

PHASE I - RESEARCH *

Project Activities - Action Research and Communication

The first phase of the Project included three activities. First, the Project Team performed a literature search to identify various approaches to school-centered job placement, and to obtain an impression of the most advanced developments of the concept of job placement. Second, the team designed and conducted a national survey to ascertain the frequency and quality of placement programs. Third, the team used its growing expertise in placement matters to assist schools and school systems that wished to initiate or expand job placement. That technical assistance aspect of the Project gave it a distinct "action research" flavor that was maintained throughout all three phases. Although such an active posture departs from the standards of academic research in social science, the Project Team pursued it vigorously. That attitude demonstrates an important fact about the School-to-Work Project. From the outset, it was not a research effort designed to produce a printed report alone. Rather, it was a project to expedite change in American education and in the larger community.

In the course of conducting the three Phase I activities, the Project Team was in contact with most of the leading job placement programs in the country. With the help of the Chairpersons and Executive Directors of the State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education, the Project Team identified and studied 263 placement programs. The Team

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* Information on this phase is abstracted from a Summary by Eugene V. Martin, dated March, 1974.

transferred the knowledge gained from their work to twenty school systems. That activity emphasizes another important aspect of the entire School-to-Work Project. The Project attempted to compile, synthesize, and communicate the successful ideas, designs and strategies of others. Except for that effort, the Project never attempted to do anything that was contrived in an office in Washington.

PHASE I RESULTS -

Guides, Findings, and Recommendations

Based on its activities during the Project's first phase, the Project Team produced a series of six guides that schools could follow in attempting to provide job placement services. These guides covered the range of subjects related to school-based job placement. The titles of the six guides are listed here.

1. New Perspectives on Placement
2. Placement Services and Activities: How They Operate
3. Students and Employers: How They Participate in The Program and How The Program Provides Services to Them
4. How to Plan and Operate Job Placement Services
5. Follow-Up and Follow-Through
6. Management Information

The content of the six guides subsequently served as a partial basis for the development of a curriculum during Phase II of the School-to-Work Project.

The first Phase also reported the following findings:

- Schools were generally interested in providing job placement services for students. The schools need help, however, in establishing collaborative relationships

with employers, unions, state employment services, and other local agencies. They also require assistance in designing, proposing, and funding comprehensive placement programs.

- The key element in establishing a placement program is superintendent's support. With such support, a placement service can be established with a modest allocation of funds and staff.
- Many organizations help to obtain jobs for youth. Their work, however, would be far more efficient if it were coordinated by and integrated with the programs of schools. The schools have a unique ability to prepare young people, over a considerable period of time, for the school-to-work transition.
- School-based job placement, based on affirmative action, is one method of demonstrating to students that society is really interested in equality of employment opportunity.
- "In School Systems Where Explicitly Structured Placement Programs Operate, More Students Got Jobs Than Before, And They Generally Earned More Money. These Schools Were Also Characterized By Their Increased Efforts To Implement Career Education Programs."*

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* The March 1974 Report did not imply a causal relationship between program operation and youth employment. Such a conclusion would require much deeper analysis than was possible during Phase I.

Given those findings, the School-to-Work Project Team recommended national legislation, leadership, and communication to stimulate the spread of school-based job placement. "Additional Recommendations" included "training and retraining of placement specialists for the schools," development of placement skills courses for students, and the establishment of placement as a priority of career education. The Team also urged that technical assistance in school-based job placement be provided by Federal Government agencies.

The clearest programmatic recommendation asserted that placement services "should have a distinct staff, clear set of objectives and activities, a designated budget, and methods of program accountability."*

PHASE II - DEVELOPMENT

Project Organization

The Project Team for Phase II included the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education (NACVE) and the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation (NAIEC). The work to be performed was the responsibility of NAIEC under contract with the U. S. Office of Education. The NACVE supported the Project with office space, telephones, and equipment. The Project was supported with Office of Education funds. Additional funds were provided by the Department of Defense. Beginning

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* As will be noted later, that recommendation has been misconstrued repeatedly and should, therefore, be clarified.

in October, 1974, and for the duration of the Project, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company made available the services of Robert Schoenberg.

In addition, the Project was assisted by an Advisory Committee from business, labor, industry, education, and government.

Project Scope

From the various recommendations that issued from Phase I, the National Advisory Council chose to carry out those for which the Council was best suited. The Council could provide leadership and communication to the job placement movement. In addition, the Council -- in conjunction with NAIEC -- could advance the cause of training job placement specialists in the schools. The latter capability was provided to NACVE and NAIEC by Samuel M. Burt, a leading authority in the youth employment field and a long time advocate of industry-education cooperation. Mr. Burt's efforts in compiling and writing materials for the training of job placement specialists were the essence of Phase II. Following Mr. Burt's death in June, 1975, NAIEC and NACVE -- supported by consultants -- completed the development of the training materials.

The specific product of the Project's second phase was to be a curriculum for the training of job placement specialists. The curriculum -- to be published as a manual -- was to be field tested in three sites, revised in light of test results, and delivered (100 copies) to the U. S. Office of Education. To encourage subsequent dissemination of the Manual, the NAIEC was to publish a monthly newsletter describing the progress of the Manual's development.

PHASE II RESULTS

The NAIEC Manual, in draft form, was some 1400 pages of text and resource material. It was assessed at sites in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Florida for purposes of the contract. In addition, it was evaluated at sites in Texas, Indiana, Vermont, Kansas, New York, and Wisconsin. The Manual was reviewed by a total of over 75 educators and guidance professionals in those states. The evaluations were positive, although all reviewers said that the draft of the Manual was too voluminous. Many suggestions for reorganization and deletion were provided. Based on the reviews, NAIEC completed the revision of the Placement Services Training Curriculum Manual. The final draft was delivered in October, 1975, and the Manual was approved by the Office of Education in January 1976.

An important ancillary result of the Project's second phase was the identification of new placement programs throughout the nation. In every state, education professionals, community leaders, and business persons are working to close the gaps between schooling and gainful employment. This trend affirmed the need for the Manual, and information on new placement programs enriched the Manual's content. The Manual was largely the result of a dialogue between NAIEC (primarily Sam Burt) and designers and practitioners of existing school-based job placement programs.

In no sense was the Manual purported to be definitive. Rather, it is a usable juxtaposition of a range of concerns that all placement specialists must face and of solutions that have proven effective. As such, the Manual will serve the needs of persons who

wish to learn to provide school-based job placement and to teach others to do so.

PHASE III - DISSEMINATION

Project Activities

The final phase of the Project consisted of dissemination of materials on job placement. The Materials were collected by the Project Team beginning in 1972. In addition, the Placement Services Training Curriculum Manual became available for dissemination in February of 1976.

The Project Team followed an eight-step procedure:

1. Contact with SACVE's (State Advisory Councils on Vocational Education);
2. Contact -- through SACVE's -- with the State Departments of Education;
3. Presentation of Project resources to State Departments, and others;
4. Follow-up mailings of materials to States (no more than five copies per state);
5. Follow-up telephone calls, correspondence, and -- as necessary -- additional visits with state officials;
6. Collection of feedback data on how the Project materials were used by the state officials;
7. Collection of additional placement materials for possible insertion into the materials package;
8. Preparation of reports on progress observed.

The key point in the eight step procedure occurred after the materials were presented to the state departments. At that time, the state officials were asked to make a commitment to start a training

program for placement specialists (on a pilot basis and with NACVE assistance). The NACVE Project Team offered no financial incentive, but an offer of materials and technical assistance was made. The technical assistance was to consist of help from the Project Team in organizing a training course tailored to each state's needs, resources, and programs.

The commitment of the state department to begin a training course was seen to be the best result that the NACVE Team could seek. The NACVE Project was not intended to continue beyond the initial stages. The National Advisory Council did not wish to insinuate its staff into the essentially local and state governance of education. Furthermore, the Project Team was convinced that an initial commitment was sufficient to set off new intra-state efforts to improve placement. The dynamics of interest, competition, and ambition would then take hold. Within a few years, the concept of school-based job placement would be commonplace throughout every state. The Project Team was also sure that the techniques of placement services would be much better, several years hence, than anything that the NACVE Team could deliver in 1975.

The Project Team also held the conviction that the purpose of the dissemination phase was merely to expedite the diffusion of the school-based job placement concept. The dissemination activity was never depicted as "vital," "essential," or "indispensable," because it seemed that school-based job placement would probably become a reality, eventually, even without the Project. The Project would only hasten that process. That would be, in itself, a welcome development because

3,000,000 students graduate from high school each year. Thus, even if the NACVE Project reached only a small number of school systems, the benefits of job placement services might extend to many students. The benefits of the Project, moreover, might continue to accrue long after the Project ended as more and more school systems embraced job placement as a normal service of the secondary school.

In summary, the third phase of the Project had modest, short-run goals which were believed to be of major, long-range impact. The Project had a sensible, practical approach for diffusing the school-based job placement concept. It was always portrayed as a means of improving education; never was it depicted as a panacea for the ills of American youth.

RESULTS OF PHASE III

Practitioners in school career education and guidance programs were eager to obtain copies of all information available on the job placement process. Between September, 1975, and January, 1976, the School-to-Work Project received over 500 requests for information on placement. The Project Team answered all of them, pointing out that the NAIEC Manual would soon be available. The School-to-Work Project did not have funds to cover the distribution of the Manual, so the responses to requests indicated that the Manual would have to be purchased after the U. S. Office of Education approved its release.

The School-to-Work Project also was a success to the degree that it helped to encourage and shape the growing movement toward school-based job placement. The Project Team was involved in only

seventeen states during the second and third phases,* but over the three and one-half years of the Project, every state and territory was reached. The Project was seen as a response from Washington to the states that had established job placement as a primary goal. As such, the Project encouraged state and local job placement specialists to continue their work. It appears -- as the School-to-Work Project ends -- that the states and localities have strengthened their commitments to job placement. The recent American Vocational Association Convention in Anaheim, California, demonstrated the very high level of interest in school-based job placement activities.

During Phase III, the Project Team had the opportunity to listen to the views of many educators on the subject of job placement. In every state that the Team visited, job placement was expanding its claim on attention and resources. In several states, the Project Team had little to offer, with the exception of the Manual and other materials that all find to be useful.

The conversations in the states invariably turned to whether or not the National Advisory Council saw one way and only one way as the correct method of establishing school-based job placement. Must there be state legislation? Must there be staff, separate from other school staff (see page 6 above) assigned exclusively to job placement?

The NACVE Project Team responded by saying that <u>full implementation</u> of job placement probably would require separate funding and staff, and depending on the laws of the states, separate legislation. Full implementation, however, is not the issue in many localities. <u>Commitment</u> to initiate the school job placement process is the immediate challenge. At this stage, separate staff, budget and legislation are

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* Phase III included Alabama, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.

not required. Placement efforts without those attributes have been successful.

In some areas, however, where legislators have assumed a leadership role, legislation has proven to be an important force in the change process. Florida and Virginia demonstrate that point, and the anticipation that legislation will soon pass in Michigan has already spurred the movement toward job placement services in that state. But those three examples do not prove that legislation is a proper prescription for every state. Needs, resources, and priorities vary among the states and within each; that diversity discounts the value of any blanket recommendation. In addition, change that begins with legislation faces just as many, though different, barriers as does change from the grass roots. Either strategy requires work over an extended period.

Opposition to School-Based Job Placement

During the third phase, the Project Team noted strong statements against the very premise that schools should provide job placement services. Such opposition should not be ignored because it was well-reasoned and articulate. The most frequent resistance centered on the lack of funds available to schools to initiate any new service. Other opponents of job placement services insisted that placement is not a proper function of the schools but of the state employment services. By assuming a share of that mission, the schools would accept a costly risk. The schools are already held accountable for curing too many of society's ills that are only tangentially related to public education.

Any failure to provide job placement -- if it were accepted as a responsibility -- might further erode the schools' credibility. Schools cannot afford such an unwise venture. Strengthening of state employment services was seen as a much better prescription for closing the school-to-work gap.

Additional resistance to the in-school job placement concept probably exists among employers and labor organizations. The depressed state of the economy makes those groups reluctant to provide additional support either to the schools, or to the new recruits to the labor force. In fact, some long-established cooperative education programs have been terminated or reduced because of high rates of adult lay-offs in the cooperating firms. As a result, although representatives of labor and industry were most helpful to the School-to-Work Project, their actions at the local level will probably be severely limited for the foreseeable future.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

These are the early days of career education and its corollary, school-based job placement. Not many workers are asked to evaluate what they have learned at work, on the job. Not many employers attempt to promote the educational value of the experience of working. Career education and school-to-work seek to change these conditions just as much as they pursue change within the programs of the public schools. It is apparent that both employers and schools must change -- otherwise, improvements in either will be impossible. That process will take time. Hopefully, a brisk economic recovery will accelerate those changes.

Several steps can be taken -- regardless of economic variables -- to expedite the needed changes.

1. The School-to-Work concept must be more clearly portrayed as a basis for improved learning. That point must be repeated until all the needed participants in business, labor, government, and education understand that school-based job placement is not intended to be a solution to youth unemployment, per se. When that understanding has been achieved, the participants will know that the School-to-Work concept is realistic, that it demands change that is beneficial, and that it is the proper concern of educators.

2. The impact of school-based job placement programs must be measured and reported. Impact must be shown on two scales, improved job placement, and improved learning. Lacking reports of the effectiveness of the programs, officials in government, business and labor cannot be expected to increase their participation in placement programs.

3. University and college schools of management, labor relations, and public administration must give more attention to increasing the educational function of the work place. The decision makers who graduate from those schools will need to reduce the false barriers that have been erected between school and work, learning and working, student and worker. Leaders in the work place as well as in the school need to recognize the mutually beneficial results of active industry-labor-education cooperation. Universities must play a role in developing that awareness.

Thus, the School-to-Work Project can be seen as a part of the educational ferment of the 1970's. The Project raised the subject

of school-based job placement to a high level of awareness. It planted questions in the minds of educators, business persons, labor leaders, and national policy makers. It achieved and disseminated a variety of linkages between the mistakenly separated education and work sectors. As the Project ends, job placement services in schools are much more numerous than when the Project began. That was the goal of the Council, both in preparing its Third Report and in sponsoring the Project, even though the Project may not have directly caused any of the specific changes that have occurred. That general result, favorable to school-based job placement, is the success that the National Advisory Council and the other individuals and groups involved in the Project can claim.

Should the School-to-Work Project continue?

At this time, the Project serves to hasten the process by which schools share responsibility for job placement for all students. If that expediting mission is seen to be part of the priorities of the United States Office of Education, or of the United States Employment Service, the Project might well continue under their auspices. Modification of the Project to include the three recommendations above should be undertaken if the Project proceeds. Visits to the remaining states, the territories, and return visits to states should be contemplated. A budget item for materials distribution amounting to $5,000 is also recommended, even if the Project is not continued.

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MAY 27 1976

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The 'materials' referred to in connection with the Final Report of the School-to-Work Project consist of a Manual that has not as yet been printed.

The Office of Education has responsibility for the production of the Manual, and its availability will be announced in the Education Trade publications.